

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 SAM-01

SAB-01 SCCT-02 OMB-01 SR-02 ORM-03 EA-11 AID-20 DRC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8545

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

S E C R E T BEIRUT 7016

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE AND PALESTINIAN REACTION TO TODAY'S ISRAELI
BOMBARDMENT OF REFUGEE CAMPS

REF: BEIRUT 7015 (NOTAL)

1. AT 2000 LOCAL THIS EVENING JUNE 20 I WAS ASKED TO APPEAR AT
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AT 2130. PHOTOGRAPHERS WERE
PRESENT AND AFTER MUCH PICTURE TAKING I MET WITH PRIMIN
SOLH AND ACTING FORNMIN GHOSN. PRIMIN BEGAN WITH
OUTLINING TODAY'S ISRAELI RAIDS WHICH HE SAID RESULTED
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IN AT LEAST 53 DEAD, AND AT LEAST 46 WOUNDED, WHICH INCLUDED

6 CHILDREN. MAJORITY OF CASUALTIES WERE PALESTINIANS. ATTACKS CONSISTED OF TWO WAVES, THE SECOND OCCURRING WHILE RESCUERS WERE ENDEAVORING FIND DEAD AND WOUNDED IN DEBRIS AMID DELYED ACTION BOMBS. PRIMIN SAID THAT LATE THIS AFTERNOON HE HAD CONVOKED ARAB AMBASSADORS AND HAD INFORMED THEM OF ISRAELI ACTIONS. THEIR REACTIONS WERE "VIOLENT". HE HAD SUBSEQUENTLY RECEIVED, AT THEIR REQUEST, PALESTINIAN LEADERS INCLUDING ARAFATT, ALL OF WHOM HE SAID WERE "FURIOUS, ENRAGED AND RELATIVELY IRRATIONAL". ONE PALESTINIAN HAD SAID THERE WERE 43 KIBBUTZIM THAT THEY WOULD STRIKE WITHIN THE NEXT 24 HOURS. PRIMIN REVIEWED AT SOME LENGTH EFFORTS LEBANESE, EGYPTIANS AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS HAD MADE TO ENHANCE POSITION OF MODERATE ELEMENTS IN PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT AND CITED THE APPARENT SUCCESS OF THE RECENT MEETING IN CAIRO WHERE MODERATES HAD PREVAILED. MODERATES HOWEVER THIS EVENING, INCLUDING ARAFAT, WERE TALKING WILDER THAN THE MOST RADICAL ELEMENTS. ACCORDING PRIMIN, ARAFAT ATTACKED HIM BITTERLY FOR BE-SPEAKING MODERATION IN THE PAST AND STATED THAT UNLESS ISRAEL MADE SOME DRAMATIC GESTURE, HE, ARAFAT, WOULD FOLLOW GEORGE HABBASH'S LINE AND RATHER "DIE LIKE A LION" THAN BE DESTROYED BY ISRAELI BOMBS.

2. I ASKED PRIMIN IF IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR AN ARAB LEADER TO MAKE SOME STATEMENT CONDEMNING TERRORISM. I POINTED OUT THAT LAST FEDAYEEN RAID IN ISRAEL RESULTED IN 4 GROWN MEN KILLING 3 UNARMED WOMEN. HE DISMISSED THIS SUGGESTION WITH A WAVE OF HIS HAND STATING THAT NO ONE COULD BESPEAK REASON THE PALESTINIANS OR THE

ARABS TONIGHT.

3. PRIMIN, WITH GHOSN CHIMING IN, REPEATEDLY STATED THAT UP TO NOW HE HAD BEEN OPTIMISTIC RE A MIDDLE EASTERN SOLUTION. TONIGHT, HOWEVER, HE WAS IN THE DEPTH OF DESPAIR (THIS WAS EVIDENT IN HIS FACE) AND THAT ISRAEL BY ITS MURDEROUS ATTACKS OVER THE LAST THREE DAYS, PARTICULARLY THOSE OF TODAY, HAD DASHED HIS HOPES.

4. PRIMIN MADE NO REPEAT NO SPECIFIC REQUEST OTHER THAN THAT
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WE MUST BRING SOME SENSE TO THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT. HE INDICATED NO RPT NO GOL COURSE OF ACTION OTHER THAN AGAIN CONSULTING TOMORROW WITH ARAB AMBASSADORS. HE SAID HE HAD HOPED THAT RABIN WOULD BE A REASONABLE MAN BUT THAT TODAY'S ACTIONS FAR EXCEED ANY OF THOSE PERPETRATED BY HIS PREDECESSOR AND HE WAS CONVINCED THAT ISRAEL DID NOT DESIRE PEACE AND THAT THE SITUATION WAS WORSE THAN IT HAD EVER BEEN BEFORE. I DEMURRED

AGAIN REFERRING TO THE LAST FEDAYEEN ATTACK KILLING 3 WOMEN, ETC., BUT HE DISMISSED MY COMMENT BY CITING OF THOSE KILLED THE LAST FEW DAYS BY OFFICIAL ACTS OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT. PRIMIN TOUCHED BRIEFLY ON THE "GREEN LIGHT" WHICH HE SAID HE REALIZED HAD NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN GIVEN BY OUR PRESIDENT BUT WHICH HE SAID WAS BELIEVED BY THE PALESTINIANS AND THE MAN IN THE STREET TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN. I CITED UNDERSEC SISCO'S TESTIMONY BEFORE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. PRIMIN CONCURRED AND BROUGHT FORTH AN AFTERNOON BEIRUT PAPER THAT HEADLINED "AMERICANS CONDEMNED ISRAELI ATTACKS. THESE VIEWS NOT REPEAT NOT BROUGHT OFFICIALLY TO GO'S ATTENTION FOR THEY ARE ALREADY KNOWN."

5. IN CLOSING I ASKED AGAIN IF PRIMIN COULD NOT ONCE AGAIN PREACH MODERATION TO THE PALESTINIANS FOR OTHERWISE I COULD ONLY SEE A SUCCESSION OF SPIRALING INCIDENTS. PRIMIN SHOOK HIS HEAD SADLY SAYING HE COULD NOT REPEAT NOT DO SO THIS EVENING BUT THAT PERHAPS TOMORROW HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO SO. (COMMENT: I DO NOT BELIEVE THIS SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY). IN LEAVING AT 2130 I CROSSED IN THE CORRIDOR THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR AZIMOV. MY CHAUFFEUR LEARNED FROM PRIMIN SECURITY GUARDS THAT BRITISH, FRENCH AMBASSADORS AND PRC CHARGE WILL FOLLOW AT 30 MINUTE INTERVALS.
GODLEY

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